

Anthropologists' Debate: Concern over Future of Foreign Research

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Perhaps more than the members of other academic disciplines, U.S. anthropologists are apprehensive about being able to continue their "laboratory" work. Many find an increasing number of impediments blocking the foreign-area research which they feel is absolutely essential to their profession.

Last year, in the wake of the wreck of Project Camelot, the Anthropological Association commissioned its executive board to explore the profession's relationships with the agencies which sponsor foreign research. The board received a \$21,750 grant from the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, and appointed Ralph L. Beals, of the University of California, Los Angeles, a past president of the association, to report on the subject.

During 1966, Beals spent 8 months preparing his report. He and Stephen T. Boggs, then the association's executive secretary, interviewed anthropologists throughout the country concerning their foreign research experience and held extensive conversations with relevant government officials in Washington. Beals traveled to Latin America to gather more data. In addition, 40 other anthropologists asked their colleagues for information on their particular areas

ment, particularly the CIA, have posed as anthropologists. . . ."

2) "Anthropologists . . . have been full- or part-time employees of the United States intelligence agencies including the CIA especially, either directly, or through grants from certain foundations with questionable sources of income, or as employees of private research organizations. . . ."

3) "Some anthropologists, particularly younger anthropologists, who have encountered difficulties securing financing for legitimate research undertakings, have been approached by obscure foundations . . . only to discover later they were expected to provide intelligence information, usually to the CIA. . . ."

Anthropologists react to such requests in a variety of ways, Beals noted. Some refused to give information to any representative of the U.S. Government. Others give information which they think may improve U.S. understanding and policy. Even in such cases, Beals reported, "the overwhelming majority of anthropologists believe they should give no information which might prove harmful either to the host country or to individuals in the host country."

Beals found that research grants

from the National Institute of Mental Health, the National Science Foundation, and the Smithsonian Institution were less suspect abroad than were research grants from the U.S. Information Service, the CIA, and the Defense and State departments, and that most anthropologists would prefer government support from the three first-named agencies.

In addition to being concerned about intelligence operations, many anthropologists were dissatisfied with the State Department's Foreign Affairs Research Council. [The council was created after the demise of Project Camelot, to judge the foreign research proposals supported by various federal agencies (*Science*, 10 Sept. and 10 Dec. 1965)]. Beals said that the work of some anthropologists had been delayed by the review process, and that, although there was no evidence of council censorship so far, the potential of such research censorship existed. Beals also said that the council would not necessarily prevent future Camelot-type operations.

"There are strong reasons to suspect that private organizations offering 'systems' approaches but without competent social science staffs or experience with problems of foreign area research are contracting to do very large-scale Camelot-type studies in countries where this is acceptable to the U.S. Ambassador and the host country," Beals said. "Experienced personnel do not exist for research on this scale. Young, partially trained, and inexperienced people are being recruited and in some cases literally seduced by extravagant salaries." Beals warned his fellow

of foreign research. It is estimated that approximately 500 anthropologists contributed to the Beals report, although some questioned the propriety of having their association inquire into such matters.

After first presenting his findings to the executive board, Beals discussed his conclusions at the annual meeting in Pittsburgh last month in preparation for proposed action by the Fellows of the association. One of the most disturbing aspects of U.S. governmental activity in anthropology is the suspected use of anthropology as a cover for intelligence operations. On the basis of information gained from reports from the field, Beals said he can state "with considerable confidence" that:

1) "Agents of the intelligence branches of the United States Govern-

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